

Bangalore Declaration: 'Toward a New World Order'

The Centre for Social Justice and the Schiller Institute organized an International Conference on the "World Situation After the Iraq War," in Bangalore, India, on May 26-27, 2003. The conference, the first of its kind in Asia, was attended by 260 participants, and was addressed by eminent personalities, experts, and scholars from several countries. A major contribution came from educated, politically aware young men and women, who took an active part in the discussions. After intense deliberations, the conference issued the following statement, entitled the **Bangalore Declaration**:

The U.S.-led attack on Iraq is the most serious development in the 21st Century, the beginning of a new millennium, that has raised some fundamental questions about the international orders, the rights and obligations of sovereign nation-states, and the use of force in pursuit of objectives that are questionable.

The massive military attack by Anglo-American forces was carried out in spite of globally widespread demonstrations by peace-loving people against the war, the opposition of a majority of members of the UN Security Council, especially of the three permanent members of the Council. It is significant that in spite of the majority of the UN Security Council strongly supporting it, the process of peaceful resolution of the situation, especially Iraq's disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, was not allowed the opportunity to work through the UN-established inspection system, which was proceeding satisfactorily. Since the matter was under active consideration of the UN Security Council, whose primary responsibility continues to be international peace and security, U.S.-U.K. decision to proceed with the war on their own without a UN mandate assumes even more serious dimensions. The war, instead, was launched in great hurry.

The charges that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction in violation of its international treaty obligations and UN resolutions, and that Iraq supported international terrorism, were used as the main reasons for launching the war under the principle of pre-emption against a threat to U.S. security. However, in continuation of the reports of the UN and IAEA inspection system, and in spite of the most intrusive and extensive search by the occupation forces during and after the war, no evidence to support U.S.-U.K. claims has been found so far. On the other hand, there are many media reports that U.S.-U.K. intelligence reports cited in support of their case at the UN to use force are considered highly questionable.

The ostensible reason for the war was also based on the concept and goal of "regime change." The United States administration has also raised the prospects of the need to

change regimes in other countries. It must be emphasized that this concept completely, and cynically, undermines the very concept of sovereign states and violates the UN Charter, that are the bedrock of the international system. We call upon major countries like China, France, Germany, India, Japan, and the Russian Federation to initiate a process of dialogue with the United States to evolve a common approach to effectively meet the challenges of international peace and security in the future based on the principles of the UN Charter and Panchsheel.¹

The world situation today as a consequence of the war on Iraq demands the people of the world come together—as they showed in simultaneous demonstrations in 354 cities of the world before the war started—to take an active part in promoting peace and prosperity with dignity and social justice in the world. Establishing a just and equitable economic order in the world is an urgent necessity if the vast majority of people in the world are to enjoy the benefits of human and scientific progress. The people's will in expanding democratization of the world is the surest way to guide political will toward this direction.

Developments leading to war, especially the position adopted by some of the leading powers, demonstrate that the international order is becoming less aligned. This opens new opportunities to strengthen the process and build a more cooperative International Order. What we need is a new community of nation-states, non-aligned in military terms, but aligned against all forms of political, social, and economic injustice, and a global movement to pursue a new, just political-economical order.

The people of Iraq, already living under severely adverse conditions for years, have suffered immensely from the war, and its longer-term effects are still not clear. Administration in the country has completely broken down and little or nothing has been done by the occupying powers to control widespread lawlessness, criminal activity, looting, and killings, with pervasive insecurity, leading to phenomenal humanitarian hardships and challenges. There is an urgent need for all countries and humanitarian assistance to rebuild a shattered society. Above all, a government of the Iraqi people must assume full powers for the governance of Iraq at the earliest. **Regardless of the events leading to the war, this must now constitute the highest priority for the world and the UN.**

The conference called upon the peace-loving people, especially young men and women, to launch a worldwide movement to achieve the above goal.

The conference declared Bangalore the "**City of Peace and Harmony.**"

1. The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence of nations, formulated in June 1954 by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. The principles are: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; respect for mutual equality and working for mutual benefit; and peaceful co-existence.